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HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION IN WESTERN CHINA, NOVEMBER 1952;
CHINESE PLANS FOR ADDITIONAL ROAD CONSTRUCTION

[Summary: The Sikang-Tibet highway being built between K'ang-ting and Lhasa has passed Ch'ang-tu, in Sikang, and construction is now in progress on the further side of the Chin-sha Chiang. The road is now in use as far as Ch'ang-tu.

Progress in highway transportation in the Northwest has been rapid and substantial. Since 1949 and up to the end of June 1952, the kilometrage of modern highways in operation increased 136 percent, the number of motor vehicles in use at the end of June was 31 percent more than at the end of 1950; the total tonnage in the first half of 1952 was 145 percent greater than in the whole of 1950. Motor truck transport rates have been reduced to 55 percent of the 1950 rates.

Fukien has appropriated 40 billion yuan for its highway improvement program, which involves 22 highways with an aggregate length of 1,180 kilometers.]

HIGHWAY TO LHASA CROSSES THREE GREAT RIVERS -- Hong Kong, Wen-hui Jih-pao, 10 Nov 52

K'ang-ting, 9 November (Chung-kuo Hsin-wen She) -- Thousands of army troops, peasant laborers, technical workers, and engineers are at work on the Sikang-Tibet Highway across the world's highest and largest plateau. Work started in 1951 to build a motor road from K'ang-ting to Lhasa, a project which in magnitude and difficulty is rare in the history of road construction in any country. Its purpose is to strengthen the defense of the southwest frontier of China and to carry the blessings of liberation to the people of that remote and backward part of the world.

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In its course, this highway must have bridges to cross three great rivers, the Chin-sha Chiang (upper reaches of the Yangtse River), the Lan-ts'ang Chiang (Mekong), and the Nu Chiang (Salween). Men must work at elevations of over 5,000 meters in treeless areas of exceedingly sparse population, conditions which necessitate the transport of all supplies over excessively great distances.

After crossing Er-lang Shan Range, east of Lu-ting, a new suspension bridge was thrown across the rapidly flowing Ta-tu Ho, near the old chain bridge at Lu-ting where a battle took place in 1935 between the Nationalist troops and the Red Army on the latter's long march from Kiangsi and Yunnan to Yen-an in Shensi Province. West of K'ang-ting, construction has passed over the Che-to Shan range and the Ch'iao-er Shan range and crossed beyond the further bank of the Chin-sha Chiang. With the completion of this road, it will no longer take 100 days to travel from K'ang-ting to Lhasa.

HIGHWAY OPEN TO COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC -- Hong Kong, Wen-hui Jih-pao, 26 Nov 52

Ch'ang-tu, 25 November (Chung-kuo Hsin-wen She) -- Commercial traffic on the Sikang-Tibet Highway, between K'ang-ting and Ch'ang-tu, formally began with the arrival on 20 November 1952 of a 50-kilometer-long caravan of Chinese goods and with the receipt of telegrams of encouragement and exhortation from Chairman Mao Tse-tung and General Chu Te. The distance from Ma-ni-ken in the grasslands to Ch'ang-tu is 446.45 kilometers. The point of lowest altitude in this section is 3,300 meters above sea level. Of this distance, more than 80 kilometers are above the snow line. More than 150 large and small bridges had to be built.

The commanding officer of the troops garrisoning this area and working on the construction of the highway is General Ch'en Ming-i (1) [numbers in parentheses refer to appended Chinese characters] and General Jang Ming-te (2), deputy chief of the Department of Communications of the Southwest Administrative Committee and Political Commissar of the garrison in this area.

Ch'ang-tu is the commercial center of this part of Tibet. With its environs, it produces annually some 6 million pounds of wool, herbs, and skins. Heretofore, it has had to rely for transportation of goods exported to and imported from China on the backs of yaks which take 50 days between Ch'ang-tu and K'ang-ting.

A rapid development of intercourse with the outside world is anticipated.

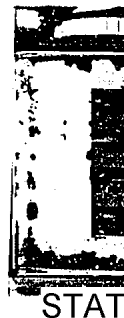
PROGRESS IN NORTHWEST HIGHWAY TRANSPORT -- Hong Kong, Wen-hui Jih-pao, 26 Nov 52

Peiping, 25 November (Chung-kuo Hsin-wen She) -- According to 1949 data destruction by KMT troops amounted to an aggregate of 2,087 meters of large bridges, the culverts on 49 roads, and the ruining of the roadbed at 171 strategic points. This destruction left only 25 percent of the Northwest highways in usable condition.

During the past 3 years, not only have the necessary repairs been made, but new construction has been extensive. For instance, the number of bridges repaired or newly constructed is 278 percent more than the number destroyed by the KMT troops, or 38.6 percent more than the total number of previously existing bridges in the area. Four times as many culverts have been repaired and newly constructed as were destroyed, or 20.5 percent more than the total number of previously existing culverts.

The kilometrage of motor roads in use in 1950 was 83.5 percent greater than in 1949, and in 1951, 46.7 percent greater than in 1950. In the first 6 months of 1952, there was an increase of 11.6 percent over 1951. This

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represents a length of motor highways in the Northwest in mid-1952 three times as great as in 1949. The present condition of the roads is such that heavy trucks can average a speed of 30 - 40 kilometers per hour.

Motor vehicle transport is much better organized and a unified system of charges has been inaugurated. Altogether, in 1952, there were 31 percent more motor vehicles than in 1950. The number of nationally owned vehicles increased 107 percent, publicly owned vehicles increased 33.1 percent; privately owned vehicles increased by 17.4 percent. In the first half of 1952, the total tonnage transported was 146 percent greater than in the whole of 1950. Since June 1951, due to the steadiness of the currency, transport rates have been reduced five times, and they now stand at 55 percent of the 1950 rate of charges.

FUKIEN PLANS 1,000 KILOMETERS OF HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION -- Hong Kong, Wen-hui Jih-pao, 10 Nov 52

Foochow, 9 November (Chung-kuo Hsin-wen She) (by telephone from Canton) -- Fukien Province is now engaged in carrying out a province-wide program of highway development. The work of surveying and planning is completed and the work of construction is started. The people's provincial government has appropriated 40 billion JMP for the purpose. In the first stage, priority is being given to the hilly regions, particularly those parts that were the early bases of revolutionary activity in the province. Fully 80 percent of the area of Fukien is hilly or mountainous.

The roads and bridges of these areas suffered a high degree of destruction and neglect, especially during the period of the Sino-Japanese hostilities, with the result that economic conditions deteriorated to extreme degrees. Since liberation, emphasis is being placed on the rehabilitation of these potentially productive areas.

Among the 22 highways, with a total length of 1,180 kilometers, to be improved in the first stage of the work, are the following: Lung-yen--Yung-an--Feng-shih; Nan-p'ing--Shun-ch'ang--Chiang-lo--T'ai-ning--Chien-ning; Chien-yang--Shao-wu--Kuang-tse; Lien-chiang--Kuan-t'ou; and Hsien-yu--Chiao-wei.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION PLANNED FOR 1953 -- New York, Hua-ch'iao Jih-pao, 15 Dec 52

Hong Kong (cable dispatch) -- The Ministry of Communications' plans for 1953 include the proposed construction of 750 kilometers of railways and 6,400 kilometers of new highways in China.

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